

## Message Text

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ACTION ORM-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 IO-10 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-04 SP-02

L-03 INR-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 ITF-05 SCA-01 DHA-02

NSC-05 /075 W

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R 280855Z AUG 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6676

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 10004

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: SREF UNHCR VS HK UK

SUBJ: UNHCR FLIGHT RETURNS AGAIN EMPTY

REF: HONG KONG 9907

1. UNHCR'S SECOND CHARTERED FLIGHT FROM SAIGON TO HONG KONG ARRIVED EVENING AUG 27 WITH NO REFUGEES ABOARD. ALEXANDRE CASELLA OF UNHCR, WHO RODE THE FLIGHT TO SAIGON AND BACK, REPORTED THAT THE PRG OFFICIALS AT SAIGON SIMPLY HAD NO PASSENGERS READY FOR DEPARTURE. CASELLA BELIEVES THE PRG MACHINERY AT THE AIRPORT IS JUST NOT ABLE TO LINE UP PASSENGERS FOR UNHCR FLIGHTS AND AT THE SAME TIME HANDLE THE FRENCH AIRLIFT TO BANGKOK.

CASELLA COMMENTED THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN HELPING THE FRENCH THAN THE HONG KONG RESIDENTS; THE VIETNAMESE PREFER THE FRENCH TO THE HONG KONG CHINESE, AND FRENCH OFFICIALS IN BOTH SAIGON AND HANOI HAVE BEEN PUTTING CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON THE VIETNAMESE TO ASSIST THEIR AIRLIFT WHILE THE UK EMBASSY IN HANOI  
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HAS DONE NEXT TO NOTHING. TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, MUCH

VIETNAMEE OFFICIAL ATTENTION IS BEING FOCUSED ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEPT 2 DRV NATIONAL DAY WITH LITTLE TIME LEFT FOR SECONDARY MATTERS SUCH AS UNHCR FLIGHTS. CASELLA SAID THAT THE AIRCRAFT SCHEDULED FOR THE FRENCH AIRLIFT TO BANGKOK AUG 27 DEVELOPED MECHANICAL PROBLEMS AND HE OFFERED TO TAKE THEIR PASSENGERS, BUT WAS TURNED DOWN BY THE PRG BECAUSE THE PASSENGERS WERE CLEARED FOR BANGKOK AND NOT FOR HONG KONG.

3. CASELLA DID NOT EXPECT THE SITUATION TO CHANGE FOR THE PRESENT AND HAS ALREADY INFORMED ONE PRG OFFICIAL THAT UNHCR WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONDUCT FLIGHTS IF IT IS UNABLE TO TAKE PASSENGERS OUT; THAT UNHCR WAS "LOSING TOO MUCH FACE", WITH OTHER NATIONS INVOLVED. HE CLAIMED THAT THE OFFICIAL WAS SYMPATHETIC TO THE PROBLEM, BUT WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE A QUICK SOLUTION. CASELLA PLANS TO FLY FROM HONG KONG TO SAIGON ON AUG 28 AND 29 WITH UNHCR MEDICAL SUPPLIES. ON THE RETURN FLIGHT FROM SAIGON AUG 28 HE WILL TAKE OUT WHOMEVER HE CAN, BUT THINKS THE ONLY LIKELY PASSENGERS WOULD BE THOSE WAITING FOR THE FRENCH AIRLIFT. ON THE AUG 29 FLIGHT HE PLANS TO CONTINUE ON FROM SAIGON TO VIENTIANE.

4. AFTER HIS RETURN TO VIENTIANE, CASELLA INTENDS TO STOP ALL UNHCR FLIGHTS TO VIETNAM UNTIL THE PRG REQUESTS UNHCR'S ASSISTANCE IN REMOVING THE "UNWANTED FOREIGNERS" FROM SAIGON. HE FEELS THE FLIGHTS SO FAR HAVE BEEN USEFUL IN THAT THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED TWO ROUTES, SAIGON-HONG KONG AND SAIGON -VIENTIANE, WHICH THE VIETNAMESE NOW UNDERSTAND THEY CAN UTILIZE WHEN THEY FINALLY FACE UP TO GETTING RID OF THEIR FOREIGN RESIDENTS.  
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